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ABSTRACT

The articles in this issue of Learning Quarterly, published by the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology (British Columbia), discuss "Charting a New Course," a strategic plan for the college, institute, and agency system in British Columbia. Introduced in 1996, the plan resulted from a collaborative effort in which institutional presidents, board members, government personnel, representatives from faculty unions, and students all worked together to develop a more learner-centered vision for postsecondary education. The plan emphasized the need to ensure that courses and programs articulate clear and testable learning outcomes. Additionally, providing more space and educational opportunities was a significant goal given the increasing student population, the necessary retooling of much of the workforce, and the variety of backgrounds of potential postsecondary students. These articles discuss the plan's successes and failures in the past three years, from the viewpoints of a faculty member in the Biology Department at Capilano College, three support staff workers at Malaspina University-College, and several other people in the system. In general, it seems that the plan has had some success in providing a meaningful context for change and predicting significant trends in the sector. However, for the best parts of it to be effectively implemented and measured, a number of revisions are needed. (JA)

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# Learning Quarterly

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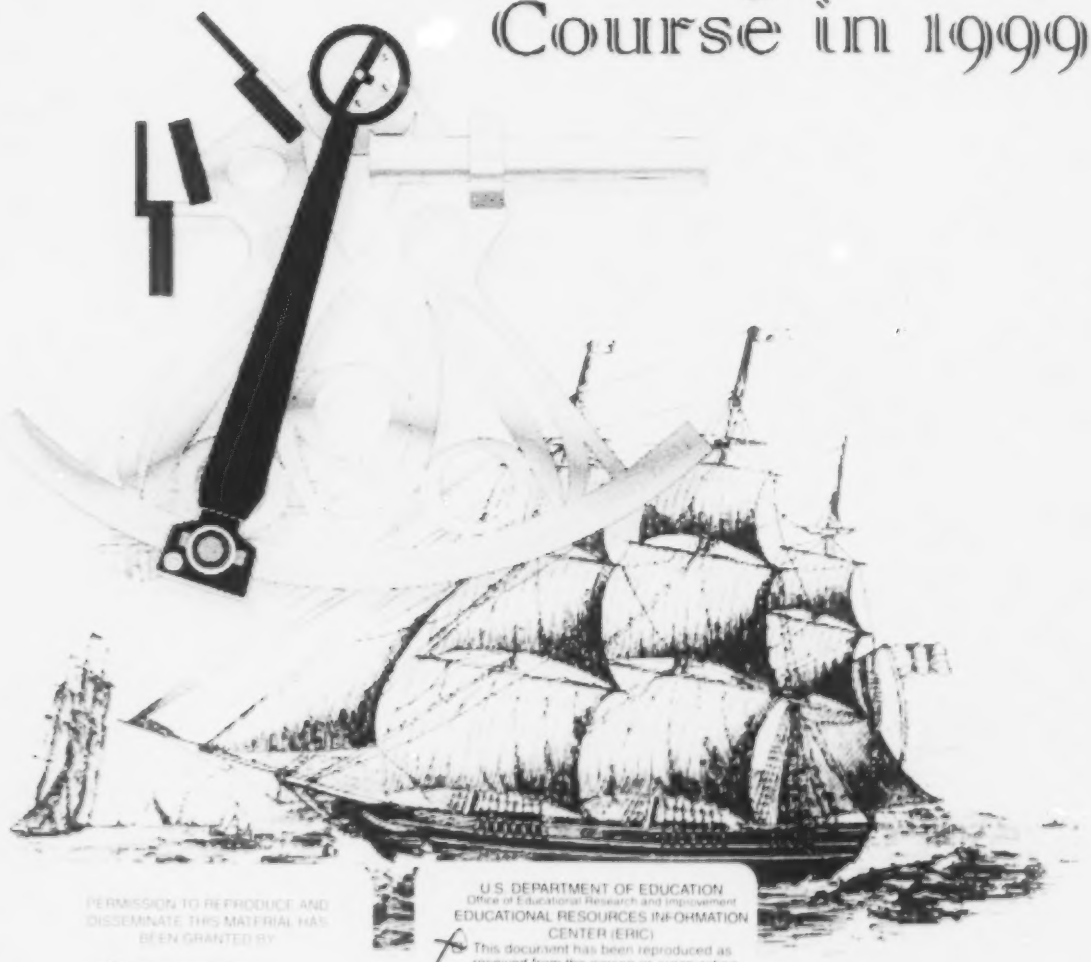
# CHANGING HORIZONS

## Charting a New Course in 1999



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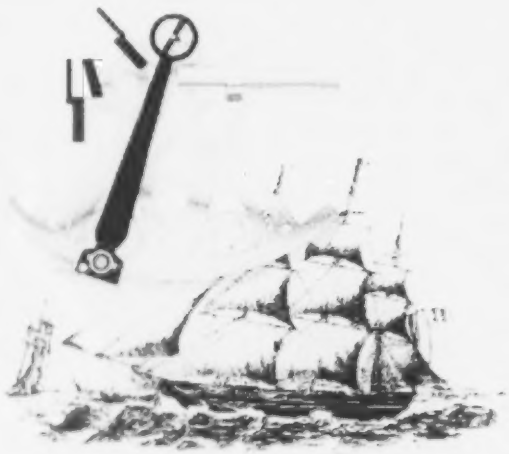
## LQ Cover Design

The cover of this issue was designed by Harvey Lubin, Web and Graphics Coordinator, at C2T2.

In keeping with the theme of this issue, "Changing Horizons: Charting A New Course in 1999", the cover image depicts a nineteenth century, tall-masted sailing ship, and a navigational instrument called a sextant.

The sextant (invented in 1731) is used in navigation for measuring the altitude of a celestial body in order to ascertain latitude and longitude.



## About This Issue

This issue of the *Learning Quarterly* has been written to provide a forum for discussion on the effects of *Charting A New Course: A Strategic Plan for the Future Direction of the College, Institute and Agency System (CANC)* since its release in 1996. In a number of ways, this edition of the *LQ* signals a departure from previous editions and heralds some of the future directions we will be taking with the *LQ*.

To begin with, this edition has been very capably edited by a guest editor, Carol Matthews, the recently retired Dean of Human Services and Community Education at Malaspina University-College. As well, Carol worked very closely over the last few months with an Editorial Committee who provided guidance on establishing the tone for the journal, selecting the articles, and reviewing them for content and accuracy. Committee members included Kevin Barrington-Foote, a faculty member from Douglas College; Rachel Donovan, Vice-President Academic from College of New Caledonia; Mark Price, Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology; Wayne Peterson, C2T2; and Devron Gaber, C2T2 (ex-officio). The Centre would like to thank both Carol and the members of the Editorial Committee for their hard work to produce the *LQ*.

Perhaps one of the main differences between this edition of the *LQ* and others is that we have sought to provide the opportunity for diverse viewpoints to be presented on the nature of *CANC* and its impact on the post-secondary system in B.C. It should be noted that articles within this *LQ* represent the views of individuals and not of organizations or constituency groups. We were pleased to see that our original call for papers for this edition resulted in submissions from both faculty and support staff. The Editorial Committee then solicited additional papers in order to round out the content and variety of the journal. We also contacted Education Council Chairs through their listserve and received the views of four Chairs on the impact of *CANC* on their Education Councils. Unfortunately, the timing of the production of this edition and the juxtaposition with exams did not allow us to include an article from students, despite attempts to do so.

Thus the following articles represent a variety of viewpoints from faculty, administration, support staff and student service workers. We welcome your letters to express your reaction to these articles and your views on *CANC* and its impact. We will print selected letters as space permits in the Fall edition of *LQ*.

– Devron Gaber


# Learning Quarterly

Vol. 3 Issue 2 Summer 1999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# Guest Editorial

*by Carol Matthews*

"Truth is the child of time, not of authority," Galileo proposes in Bertolt Brecht's *The Life of Galileo*. Our ignorance is infinite, so let us diminish it by a fraction," he says, claiming that he has the good fortune to lay his hands on an instrument "by means of which one can see one tiny corner of the universe a little clearer."[1] Three years is not a long time, and the Learning Quarterly is a modest instrument. Still, when calling for proposals to comment on *Charting A New Course (CANC)*, the staff who work on the *Learning Quarterly* supposed that three years would have provided enough time for us to see a little more clearly where *CANC* has taken us and, from the changing horizons we see ahead, to begin to comment on possible modifications in the course.

When *CANC*, the provincial strategic plan for the college, institute, and agency system, was introduced in 1996, it was touted as being the first of its kind. Where else had a provincial strategic plan resulted from a collaborative effort in which institutional presidents, board members, government personnel, representatives from faculty unions, and students all worked together to develop and ratify a plan for the improvement of post-secondary education? Members of the provincial Steering Committee which produced *CANC* still speak of the giant effort that was required, of the many months and long hours of meetings in which they discussed the context for change, identified the values that would guide their work, agreed on a vision and goals, and worked towards consensus on the strategies for reaching those goals. That this plan was formally ratified by the College and Institute Educators' Association, British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union, Advanced Education Council of B.C., Post-Secondary Employers' Association and the Ministry of Skills, Training and Labour is an achievement which seemed to bode well for the future of post-secondary education in B.C.

Since that time, discussions that have taken place in many forums – and in the articles featured in this issue – indicate substantial agreement that the overall direction is sound, but that there are adjustments and improvements that should be made in order to steer this initiative more effectively. It might be useful, then, to assess *CANC* in three categories: first, the vision, goals and values; second, the implementation strategies; finally, the institutional context and provincial environment in which most of the actions designed to implement the strategies take place.

## The Vision

It appears that there is little dissension about the basic vision, goals and values set out in *Charting A New Course*. Few would dispute the central goals of relevance and quality, affordability, access and accountability. As Bob Camfield acknowledges in his "view from the trenches," the plan's broad goals are laudable and the context is unassailable; the problems he sees are in the details and in the methods and measures of implementation. Sheila Hall and Peg Campbell's "snapshots" from Emily Carr also indicate an overall acceptance of the goals and values, while offering their own strategy of integrating PLA and Learning Outcomes as a better approach to implementation.

Al Atkinson and Ted James claim that, although we have advanced considerably in pursuing the *CANC* vision of becoming more learner-focused, we have not yet adopted the culture of change that could allow us to re-think our priorities in terms of how we value the "service side" of our institutions. In a similar vein, Ardith Conlin, Pamela Botterill and Libby McGrath raise questions about parity of esteem and about the collaborative and respectful work environment that must be developed if all staff are to become a part of implementing the plan.

Although only a few Education Council Chairs responded to our questions about the impact of *CANC* on Education Councils, those responses indicate that *CANC* has played a significant role in their work by providing direction for strategic planning, policy development, and program development and approval. However, they suggest that the strategies are not very specific, and they also note that adequate funding is necessary for implementation to be successful. Jim Bizzocchi and Adrian Kershaw

acknowledge the "profoundly human" values embedded in *CANC* and the encouraging developments that have occurred in the area of educational technology, but point out that sustained development of education technology will require a system perspective.

It is important to note that, although *Charting A New Course* is sometimes described as the *Ministry's* strategic plan, the Ministry views it as the system's plan, developed collaboratively by a steering committee composed of presidents, board members, students, representatives from faculty unions and from government. Members of the provincial steering committee share this view, but within individual institutions the concept of the "system" is a source of contention. Although none would deny that there is in this province a "network of community colleges, university colleges, institutes, and the Open Learning Agency,"[2] which is how the *CANC* document defines its use of the term "the system," there is considerable resistance to the term itself. As one faculty member in my former institution said, "There ain't no system, there ain't never been no system, there ain't never gonna be no system, and that's the system." Others have perhaps phrased their objections more elegantly, but the belief is widespread and deeply held: B.C.'s colleges, institutes and agencies were established as and must remain autonomous organizations. Current student demographic and mobility patterns, the emergence of the "non-traditional learner," the use of education technology, the increase in distributed learning formats, and accountability requirements for outcome evaluations, research and analysis may create persuasive arguments for viewing institutions as components in an integrated system, yet any reference to a provincial "system" causes discomfort and apprehension.

## The Implementation

This concept of "the system," crucial to the vision of *CANC*, is at the core of much of the disagreement about implementing the plan. Post-secondary education takes place within a complex network of very different kinds of institutions operating under and within a variety of formal and informal structures and relationships which are perceived differently depending upon the viewer's particular perspective and context. For example, registrars meet in a provincial association to discuss transcript standards, assessment procedures, and credentialling practices. Subject articulation committees work tenaciously to ensure that there is awareness and understanding of the work that takes place in different institutions so that students can transfer effectively from one institution to another. Student services staff work with school districts to improve the transition of students from secondary to post-secondary programs. Education technology innovators participate in provincial forums to exchange resources and also to discuss thorny issues about registering, tracking and assessing students in distributed learning programs.

Surely all of these efforts imply a provincial system and suggest that institutional autonomy and a ocherent provincial system need not be incompatible. But if the revitalized system is to achieve its vision of responding to and working with "an ever-expanding array of education providers, which include workplace training departments, community agencies and private institutions, as well as elementary and secondary schools and universities,"[3] a great deal of work will need to be done to develop the willingness of individuals and institutions to build, to support, and to work within such a system.

Some of the developments we see in 1999 are not encouraging. That the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training which produced *CANC* has since been divided, once again, into two separate Ministries may not facilitate secondary to post-secondary transitions. That the universities have never been a part of this collaborative planning process and that they continue to pursue their strategic planning in isolation is disheartening. That the university-colleges have tended to choose to follow the model of the traditional universities instead of choosing to become, as they might have been, the bridges that would help to provide connections between disparate players within the disjointed post-secondary network is disappointing.

At the same time, there are hopeful signs. More than any other document, *CANC* has resulted in institutions incorporating collaboratively devel-

oped, province-wide goals in their institutional planning processes and implementing the broad directions of the plan. Some of the specific strategies such as educational technology, prior learning assessment and learning outcomes have been the focus of provincial forums in which information, resources, and approaches are shared. All institutions are now required to report not just on their audited enrolments but also on their progress according to the *CANC* implementation plan.[4] Thus, from a combination of voluntary compliance and the constraints of *CANC*'s required accountability measures, we see signs that it is starting to move the system forward.

*CANC* has set out a strong and hopeful direction for the future of education in B.C. Unlike the *Access for All* initiative, it does not present a hierarchical vision of the education system in which all roads lead to universities and in which access to university is the paramount goal. Nor does it discount the public post-secondary system as inaccessible and irrelevant, as the Labour Force Development Board's *Training for What?* report was seen to do. Instead it holds out a collaboratively-developed vision of a learner-centred, comprehensive, accessible and integrated network of education providers.

## The Environment

Clearly there is great potential for collision in the course ahead — collision between institutions, between different groups within any institution, between different components of the post-secondary system and, most critical, between public budgets and actual costs of learning. We also see the increased possibilities of and need for collaboration. The process through which *CANC* was developed has established the vision of collaborative consultation and planning provincially; the far greater challenge now will be to build the environment that is necessary for successful implementation of the strategies. This will require, first, that we grapple with the vision of the "provincial post-secondary system" and find a way to live with it, a way to participate in it, a way to make it work.

It will also require, as is indicated in the following articles, that we develop the collaborative environment in which implementation can take place. We will need to develop institutional cultures in which people accommodate difference, demonstrate parity of esteem for all participants, and tackle the thorny problems involved in identifying learning outcomes, effective assessment methods and KPI's. We will have to work cooperatively and respectfully, and manage – and welcome – change. That is what will be required to continue charting the new course. Time will tell whether or not we are able to do this.

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[1] Bertolt Brecht, The Life of Galileo (London: Methuen & Co.), p.54.

[2] *CANC*, p.8.

[3] *CANC*, p.2.

[4] *CANC*, pp.67-78.

*Carol Matthews now works as a freelance writer and consultant, having recently retired from Malaspina University-College where she worked as an instructor, a Community Education Coordinator and, for over 10 years, as Dean of Human Services and Community Education Programs. She is the recipient of the 1998-1999 Association of Canadian Community Colleges Leadership Excellence Award.*

# *Charting A New Course*: Chronology of Key Events

**June 1996** – Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology established

**July 1996** – Centre for Education Information Standards and Services established

**September 1996**
- *Charting A New Course* released
- Establishment of Standing Committee on Student Financial Assistance

**April 1997**
- Contract Training and Marketing Society established
- Establishment of Task Force on Critical Issues in Financing Colleges and Institutions
- First Management Letter distributed to institutions

**May 1997** – Access and Choice: The Future of Distributed Learning in British Columbia released

**June 1997** – Establishment of Standing Committee on Evaluation and Accountability

**September to December 1997** – Institutions provide workplans, flowing out of *Charting A New Course*, to the Ministry

**September 1997** – OLA Accountability Report completed

**November 1997**
- Forum on Issues and Strategic Priorities flowing from *Charting A New Course*
- Industry Training and Apprenticeship Act proclaimed and brought into force

**December 1997**
- Distribution of Discussion Paper on System-Level Program Planning and Rationalization
- Release of the Report of the Working Committee on Public-Private Articulation Agreements
- Publication of Proceedings from Forum on Issues and Strategic Priorities for the College, Institute and Agency System in B.C.

**February 1998** – Establishment of Provincial Standing Committee for *Charting A New Course*

**March 1998** – Publication of 1997 Performance Measurement Report for B.C.'s College, Institute and Agency Sector

**April 1998** – Management Letter distributed to institutions

**June 1998** – Publication of Phase 1 of the Workplan for the Development of the Basic Operating Grant Envelope

**September 1998**
- Start of Phase II of the Workplan for the Development of the Basic Operating Grant Envelope
- Three new Career Technical Centres announced: Prince George, Nanaimo and Kamloops

**November 1998** – Establishment of Educational Technology Working Group

**September to December 1998** – Institutions submit *Charting A New Course* Update Reports to Ministry

**May 1999**
- Management Letter and Update Report overviews distributed to institutions
- Five new Career Technical Centres announced: locations to be determined

**Ongoing**
- Improvements to the B.C. Student Financial Assistance Program
- Implementation of Institution-Based Training (IBT)
- Implementation of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)
- Implementation of Provincial Learning Network (PLN)
- Implementation of Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education and Training Policy Framework



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# *Charting A New Course* - A View from the Trenches

*by Bob Camfield, Department of Biology*
*Capilano College*

> "We are against the 'process, process' mentality in schools and colleges"[1]

Three years after its official adoption as the plan for the future of B.C.'s colleges, institutes and agencies, the "Charter" has had a contentious impact on the system. Some "stakeholders" love it, others hate it, but a majority of those potentially most affected – students and faculty – seem curiously unmoved by its claims. Why has there been such a polarized response to this well-intentioned call for a comprehensive reform of a system clearly in need of one? And to what extent have the directions it proselytizes been incorporated into the system? What, so far, have been the successes of the plan and what have been its failures, and why?

Clear answers to these and other questions are difficult to get at in this early stage of an attempted major overhaul of a large and unwieldy system. The complex nature of the initiatives it seeks to introduce and the parallel difficulties in measuring its effects make any current analysis of the plan's results uncertain. However, some things are clear. First, there has been some resistance, especially among university transfer faculty, to much of the philosophical basis underpinning the plan and a reluctance to adopt some of the proposed directions. Second, there seems to have been little measurable impact, so far, on "key performance indicators"[2] or on complex employment trends in the province.

## Reactions to the plan

Two separate aspects of the plan have engendered the most serious criticism: the stridency of its assertions about what is wrong with the system and what is needed to fix it, and the underlying assumptions themselves. The certainty that the plan exudes in the face of the many unknowns in education and the job market ensured a skeptical reception from many faculty. To embrace such a transforming set of reforms, with a potentially major impact on their workloads and responsibilities, faculty needed to be persuaded by the power of the arguments and the quality of the evidence. To actively participate in the integration of the best of the plan's directions, faculty will be convinced, not by rhetoric and platitudes, but by having their reservations and input taken seriously.

The skepticism greeting the plan also derives from the siege-like mentality that pervades the system. Years of cutbacks, minimal salary increases, and a constant urging by the government of the day to do more with less, have led faculty to feel undervalued. Many faculty have become cynical about grand schemes to solve the system's ills. Significantly for this plan, faculty are expected to be the front line in implementing most of its initiatives, without commensurate improvements in resources.

## Resistance to the plan

The plan's aims are to improve the relevance and quality, access, affordability and accountability of the college sector – all highly laudable and achievable goals. The context for these goals, even three years later, seems similarly unassailable. The B.C. economy is changing from a resource dependency to a service and knowledge economy. There is a high and refractory unemployment rate and a burgeoning demand for post-secondary education from an increasingly diverse student population. Our continuing financial straits do place restrictions on the amount of public money that can be spent on education, and we should be prepared to accept more accountability of the value received for this investment, especially in demonstrable outputs from the system. So what's the big problem with the plan then?

The devil is in the details of the basis for some of its key assumptions and methods of implementation.

## "Learner-centredness"

The plan quite properly focuses on the student as the *sine qua non* of the system, but does so in a manner that implies that this is a new insight. The sector has never been characterized as unfeeling

towards its "customers" but, as experienced faculty know, there is a sensible and varying balance that has to be struck between enhancing the self-esteem of students and over-indulging them which can lead to a dependency on the system and an unrealistic expectation that it can provide all things to everybody.

## "Learning outcomes"

The plan makes a big issue of the need to ensure that courses and programs articulate clear and testable learning outcomes. Why has this commendable and irrefutable goal drawn the most fire from faculty and the most propaganda from its proponents, including attempts at having some template version of it on all course outlines made mandatory by education councils? The answer goes to the heart of the objections to the plan – a concentration on process and cosmetics to the detriment of content. Most faculty know that any course worthy of the name already has "learning outcomes" deeply embedded in the course's context and content, and often have explicitly stated these outcomes. They resent time and energy being wasted on what they perceive as "the obvious" when there are so many real problems to deal with such as marginal literacy, numeracy and comprehension. However, it is true that many faculty in career and vocational programs have welcomed this emphasis on clarifying course and program objectives, particularly where overlapping program components don't always have unambiguous relationships and obvious outcomes.

## Increased access

Providing more spaces and educational opportunities is a commendable goal given the increasing student population, the necessary retooling of much of the workforce and the variety of backgrounds of potential post-secondary students. Initiatives demanded by the plan in this area are contentious when they make unsubstantiated claims and when their implementation will involve a considerable increase in the workloads and responsibilities of faculty.

## Prior learning assessment

The direction to give academic equivalencies for work and life experiences is a worthwhile effort to provide students, particularly those from non-traditional backgrounds, with meaningful credit towards academic or applied credentials, but attempts to push its introduction beyond a sensibly cautious pace have resulted in some stiff resistance. What is at issue for many faculty is the assumption that there is some simple and easily determined relationship between what is learned inside and outside the classroom so that a quantified equivalency can be readily generated. Until this relationship is more soundly established, we would be wise to proceed cautiously if standards and credibility are to be maintained.

## Disabled students

Initiatives to improve the access and chances of success of disadvantaged students have always been strongly supported by faculty. The problem is implementation. Faculty are being told that they must make accommodation, in both teaching and evaluation methods, for students who have been deemed "significantly" disabled, without sufficient input – based in many cases on considerable relevant experience – and agreement about the nature and specific effects of the disabilities included under the umbrella. Finding better ways to teach and evaluate disabled students will require additional work and responsibility for faculty, for which no extra resources or training have been allocated. And, unless we clarify the methods and procedures used for testing and accommodation, there well may be potentially difficult disputes about the severity of the disablement affecting students near the ultimately artificial and arbitrary cut off points between "abled" and "disabled".

## "Customized learning environments"

The post-secondary student cohort is assumed to be increasingly in need of flexible learning options that will better fit the workplace, community and commuting demographics of the near future. We should, therefore, adapt curricula, instructional methods, and sites and modes of delivery to suit the variable requirements of our clients. This

simple equation will need an enormous investment of new money to work. To do well, the "redefining" of the classroom and the development of alternative modes and sites of delivery of courses will be a huge and expensive undertaking.

Another reason advanced by the plan to provide various avenues to learning is that the diversity of learners requires an equal diversity of instructional methods. Most learners graduating from the college sector will function in the B.C. education and work environments and, therefore, need to adapt to the conditions of that evolving system. They will be best served, for the most part, by being challenged to succeed in the instructional milieu that best characterizes that environment. Students, themselves, prefer consistency of methods and standards for similar courses and programs across the board, especially for those that are most relevant to their transfer to further studies or the workforce. They also prefer traditional "face-to-face" classes, if they can get them, to most of the alternative options.

## "Lifelong learning"

The best way to achieve this is to inculcate the love of learning for its own sake in concert with the acquisition of the cognitive skills that enable students to know how and what to learn with minimal help from the system. This is much cheaper and more effective but, more importantly, automatically produces the "constructive citizens" the plan itself seeks through a complex series of processes. We sometimes forget that the principal motive for learning is curiosity.

## Affordability

There is a pressing need to make education at all levels more affordable for the current users and the general taxpayer. Many of the intentions of the plan in this area are useful efforts at addressing the system's cost-effectiveness.

There is disquiet, though, about some of the ways that the call for "revitalizing" the relationships between education and business have played out. Chief among these is the "strictly business" mentality that now permeates much of the sector's bureaucracy. The new mantras of entrepreneurship, business partnerships and models have become the benchmarks for the system. However, while valuable links have been produced, dubious practices have also resulted. Some of the most egregious of these are the deals between corporations and institutions for a monopoly on the supply of goods and the explosion of advertising and company logos on college property.

There is a legitimate concern among many faculty and students that the incorporation of colleges and institutes is going too far. Faculty feel that the independence and unfettered free thinking, long defended in academic institutions, may be compromised by too close ties with business. Students worry that their educational experience is being diminished by its increasing commercialization. Both groups feel uneasy about the extent to which public funding and control of their institutions is giving way to private sector inducements and thinking.

## Suggestions for more effective implementation

The previous criticisms notwithstanding, the plan has had its successes in providing a meaningful context for change, in predicting significant trends in the sector and in acting as a catalyst for analyses of what tertiary education should look like at the start of the new millennium. However, for the best parts of it to be successfully implemented and measured effectively, a number of revisions are needed:

1. Reduce the reliance on bombast and outmoded behaviourism to force compliance with debatable schemes for change. Provide genuine opportunities for thoughtful and innovative approaches, based on solid evidence, to creating a better system.
2. Develop better methods for determining the real problems in the system (for example, the widespread math, physics and computer science phobias) and devising strategies (interdisciplinary and problem-based studies, for instance) for solving them.
3. Find ways to cope with the problem of maintaining standards in the face of an increasing number of students – a result of increased access – who are marginal at the tertiary academic level.

4. Proceed cautiously and openly with the development of business relationships, keeping in mind the very different motives that drive business and education. Develop better ways of linking the needs of industry with the supply of graduates with the appropriate skill sets[3].
5. Rethink the nature of education. Take seriously the notion that education is truly an investment and not a cost. Given the penurious state of the province's finances, this will take a realignment of priorities away from immediately desirable political projects to long-term investment in the province's human capital.
6. Increase the funding of the most pressing student needs: bursaries, scholarships, fees and such basics as food, housing, books and study space all require more money and more productive approaches. The financial demands that force most (60-65%)[4] college students to work an average of ten to fifteen hours per week have caused a major shift from full-time to part-time studies, have had negative effects on their academic performance and, most importantly, on their enjoyment of the educational experience. Ways have to be found to channel the financial need to work into useful cooperative and practicum programs that forge links between studies and potential careers.
7. Consider more expensive but more effective ways to support lifelong learning. Some suggestions include: complementing the lecture as the primary method of instruction with smaller group activities such as seminars, workshops and team problem-solving sessions; introducing mentoring to nurture individual talents and to solve individual problems, and providing more time in the curricula for digestion and reflection.
8. Invest in faculty by funding more release and leave time for scholarship, in the broadest sense, that directly, or indirectly, improves the quality of our institutions.

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9. Bring new blood into the system by providing continuing incentives for early retirement or, so that the expertise and experience of senior faculty is utilized, a reduced workload, without pension penalty.

## Measurement of outcomes

*Charting A New Course* directs that the results of the plan be determined by measuring key performance indicators (KPI's) and other quantifiable outputs. The problem is that these measurements are fraught with difficulty, both in defining precisely what is being sought and how to quantify it. Thus, key output information such as increase in generic and employability skills of graduates, or the level of improvement in the match between employer needs and student supply are insensitive to accurate and timely estimates because of the many uncontrollable factors affecting them.

A cursory examination of the Ministry's own grappling with the problem of outcomes shows just how wretchedly complex and difficult the measurement is. Data to 1997 only is currently available and reveals no discernible effect of the introduction of the plan on any of the KPI's, including the crude employment trends. The other major sources of information about how the system is doing are the surveys conducted on current and ex-students,[2,4,5] and targeted employer groups[3]. These, too, fail to show any real impact of the plan on the system over the 1995 (before the plan) to 1998 period. Still, it's too early to suggest that the plan is having no effect, only that significant results can't be demonstrated yet. Clearly, we need sharper tools, such as more direct measurements of the factors influencing student success and inventories of the specific skill sets and subject competencies required by individual industries, to determine what's really happening in the system.

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[1] Lehrman, Sally "Nobel laureates in bid to revamp science teaching" Nature: 399, 113. 1998.

[2] B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology. AETT 1997 Performance Measurement Report.

[3] Biotechnology Human Resources Council. "An Inventory of Biotechnology Education in Canada." Ottawa. 1998.

[4] Camfield, R. "Biology 106/107 and 110 Survey – Preliminary Results." Department of Biology, Capilano College. 1998.

[5] B.C. Colleges and Institutes Outcomes Surveys, Capilano College – 1995/96/97 Aggregated Data.

*Dr. Camfield is an instructor in Biology at Capilano College, where he has taught for the last twenty years. He has been President of the Faculty Association and Chair of the Education Council. Currently he is conducting an evaluation of the factors affecting student success in sciences and subsequent career aspirations.*

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# CUPE Involvement in *Charting A New Course*: Three Experiences from Support Staff Workers at Malaspina University-College

*by Pamela Botterill, Ardith Conlin, and Libby McGrattan*

**One of the system-wide institutional strategies in *Charting A New Course* is that of "fostering collaboration and positive working relationships between all representative groups and constituents of the post-secondary system, including those between and among institutions, and improving human resource management practices and support structures."[1] As secretarial support staff, the authors are eager to participate in collaborative working relationships but, in our experience, a lack of clarity about the role and potential of support staff often prevents their full participation.**

▲ Pamela became involved in governance at Malaspina University-College at a time when she didn't know anything about *Charting A New Course*, key performance indicators, or strategic planning. Elected by CUPE to become a member of the Malaspina University-College Board, Pamela went on, after her term ended, to become a member of Education Council as well as a member of one of its sub-committees, Planning and Resources.

Pamela was invited last year to attend a two-day provincial conference for CUPE members who sit on institutional boards and education councils. *CANC* was the focus of the conference. Guest speakers from the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology presented their views on the importance of all staff being involved in the new directions. Pamela knew that *CANC* and KPI's were becoming part of Malaspina's strategic planning and budgeting process, but she was confused about the connection between *CANC* and everyday life at Malaspina University-College. She wondered how this very important document would be implemented and, in particular, what the implications would be for support staff.

▲ Libby McGrattan's experience as a secretary spans 25 years. During that time she raised a family and then, at age 40, enrolled as a student at Malaspina University-College, receiving a Bachelor's degree in 1994 and going on to complete a Master's degree in Administrative Leadership from Simon Fraser University in 1996. Libby works as a secretary in the Liberal Studies Program, the area in which she completed her first degree. She felt certain that her education would be acknowledged and that it would benefit her employer. However, Libby's attendance at one meeting assured her that the glass ceiling may in fact be a plexiglass ceiling, and thus an obstacle which is harder to break through. She wondered if the promise that "attitudinal and physical barriers [would] be reduced"[2] was perhaps not meant for support staff.

The topic of the meeting was to ascertain whether a degree program should go forward or not. Libby, who was invited to participate in the meeting, asked to speak and was told to go ahead. The next day, at a celebratory Secretaries Week lunch, Libby was told by an administrator not to speak at meetings any more because there were enough faculty and administrators to do that. According to this administrator, her role was to take notes and nothing else.

▲ Ardith Conlin sat nervously at her first meeting of the provincial Working Group on Educational Technology, waiting for her turn to speak. Having volunteered as CUPE representative to sit on this working group, she found herself in heady company, the other members of the group comprising two co-chairs and three delegates from the Council of Chief Executive Officers, as well as representatives from the Council of Education Councils, the Canadian Federation of Students, the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union, the College and Institute Educators' Association of B.C., and the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology.

The working group reviewed the principles with which they would be working. One of the principles, "faculty support," did not sit well with Ardith and hence the reason for her nervousness. Ardith believed that part of her role as a representative of CUPE was to remind the group that a range of employees, not just faculty, work at B.C.'s post-secondary institutions. And then a wonderful thing occurred. One of the representatives from the Council of Chief Executive

Officers said that he felt that the term "faculty support" was too narrow; he felt strongly that this guiding principle should be changed to "employee support." Ardith breathed a sigh of relief. She would not have to rant and rave for her constituents to be recognized. Acknowledgment that support staff have contributing roles in post-secondary institutions was seen as important by this group.

As described above, the authors have had three experiences and three different reactions: confusion, rejection, affirmation. These experiences led to mixed perceptions of the collaborative relationships proposed in *CANC*. Overall, however, support staff at Malaspina have had many good opportunities in which they have demonstrated that they can make unique and positive contributions to the goals of access and quality. For example,

1. Secretaries in the Human Services area recognized that students who take night courses, most of whom are women, deserve the same type of support as day-time students. They came up with a plan through which, at no extra cost, they could increase access to the Area Centre by having the office open from 8:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. This plan resulted in increased access for students and was seen as a way to remove some of the "systemic barriers to entering and completing post-secondary education and training."[3]
2. Many clerical support staff at Malaspina are involved in training each other and faculty in the use of computers and information technology. Moving from Windows 3.1 to Windows 95 required a great deal of coaching, training, reinforcement and cheerleading from support staff, and resulted in faculty and staff members being more comfortable with the technology. This leads to an acceptance of technology and a recognition of its limits, as well as its potential.
3. The three authors are involved in the governance of Malaspina, sitting on the Board, Education Council, Planning and Resources Committee, and Educational Services Committee.
4. As learners in and graduates of Malaspina University-College's courses and programs, staff may be seen as models of lifelong learning and as participants in a learning organization.

CUPE did not choose to participate in the original drafting of *CANC*. In our opinion, this was a mistake and mistakes can and should be rectified. All employees expect recognition and respect for the knowledge, skills and abilities they bring to post-secondary institutions. We are hired by colleges and institutes because we possess certain skills, whether we are engaged as payroll clerks, instructors, groundskeepers, administrators, secretaries or electricians. We are constantly upgrading our skills and abilities and we all have a role to play in the education of learners. Everyone should and must have a voice in order for their opinions and ideas to be heard.

The experience that Ardith describes holds out hope that a new trend is emerging where the skills, opinions, ideas and importance of all employees are valued, acknowledged and treated with respect. The involvement of support staff in activities such as those listed above can and should be expanded and increased. Support staff will need to be proactive in the next phase of *CANC* if we are to achieve parity of esteem and have our contributions recognized. Involvement on the *CANC* Standing Committee bodes well for a future role for CUPE at the provincial planning table.

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[1] *CANC*, p. 64.

[2] *CANC*, p. 3.

[3] *CANC*, p. 3.

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*Pamela Botterill is Secretary for Malaspina's Human Services area and for the* Journal of Child and Youth Care. *She has served on the College Board and is currently the CUPE representative on Education Council and a member of the Planning and Resources Committee.*

*Libby McGrattan is Secretary in Malaspina's First Nations Studies Programs. She is a graduate of Malaspina's Liberal Studies Program and is currently the CUPE representative on the Malaspina University-College Board.*

# Educational Services: Moving from Adaptation to Transformation

*by Al Atkinson and Ted James*

In 1996, *Charting A New Course*, a vision and strategic plan for the college, institute and agency system, was released. The vision in that document is built around the concept of being learner-focused, and the plan identifies several goals and strategies that embrace this vision.

The implications for those of us providing educational support services are significant. We are being asked to serve increasing numbers of learners, many of whom have non-traditional or unique needs. Institutions are also being encouraged to develop and deliver programming in new and flexible ways, many of which incorporate the inclusion of sophisticated new educational technologies. Such developments are having considerable impact on educational support services charged with providing appropriate, timely, and cost-effective support for learners and faculty.

How well are we doing? In many ways we have demonstrated our ability to adapt, an attribute of which service providers have always had reason to be proud. But have we really thought through the implications of what being truly learner-focused means? Have we anticipated and planned for the significant investment in professional development for our faculty and staff that will be required to achieve this vision? Have we budgeted for the financial costs, both capital and operating, of making the best use of educational technology? Have we anticipated the new and different services that may be required to adequately support student success? Probably not, or at least not thoroughly enough.

What are our successes? We have made great strides in providing more appropriate support services for many of the equity groups identified in the plan: visible minorities, persons with disabilities, First Nations students. We have begun to develop ways in which services can be delivered through the use of educational technology: use of the web, video-conferencing, the electronic library network. We have begun the process of collaboration with other service providers in the system so that we can "share" students and resources among institutions. But, in many cases our responses have been "knee-jerk" reactions to the reality of having to accommodate the different types of learners appearing on our doorsteps, or absorb government initiatives that come with a few dollars of targeted money. Our successes should be certainly celebrated, but they have been achieved largely through a process of reaction rather than transformation. In many instances, we have simply re-created or duplicated an array of services for a particular type of student. Our "stove-pipe" tradition of separateness has simply been replicated; rather than integrating our approaches we have often just created more distinct "boxes" and "pockets" of activity – using "old ways" to serve students with different and unique needs and expectations.

We have largely been reacting to the need for change instead of proactively moving to influence and direct such change. Of course, there are very good reasons for this. Translating the vision of learner-centeredness into reality takes time, energy and, at least in the short term, additional resources. These have been in short supply in recent years and are likely to continue to be for the foreseeable future.

What, then, are some of the challenges we face in the future? Clearly, implementing further the vision articulated in *CANC* will involve a transformation or paradigm shift towards what Terry O'Banion[1] and others have called "The Learning College"; as institutions and as service providers, we have much work to do here. To achieve even some of the goals identified in the strategic plan, we need to re-think why and how we do things in relation to the true needs and expectations of the learners of the future. We need to commit ourselves to re-engineering the delivery of services to both learners and our "internal" clients – faculty and staff – so that it is both relevant and timely.

Several factors will influence the way we plan and design the future. The first factor is by far the most important: treating the learner holistically. This means that we must work much more closely with

our instructional colleagues to develop integrated support systems that support learner needs and contribute to learner success. This will require major attitudinal and cultural shifts in our institutions.

Changes in learners' needs and expectations must also be taken into account as we reconsider how to provide support services. Several elements will need to be addressed. How will we deal with the demand for "just-in-time" service requests? How will we meet the desire for access to current information and technology for a growing number of learners who are becoming more reliant on such access and choice? How will we cope with the growing demand for individualized supports for learners or the specialized supports that many of our new learners require? How will we deal with learners in the workplace, or the growing numbers of learners accessing courses and programmes through "non-credit" avenues? More and more we must expect and anticipate that our services be made available in non-traditional formats for a variety of learners accessing learning experiences in a number of different ways. These questions must be addressed at both a policy and an operational level, both provincially and within each institution. Our responses must be flexible, taking into account the many variables for each learner in his or her learning experience.

Adopting a new learner-focused and learning-focused paradigm will be a challenge; we will need to work effectively not only with our instructional colleagues but also with a variety of service providers who often do not work in an integrated or collaborative fashion. Learners of the future should expect, and we should deliver, an integrated "one-start shopping" approach to the services that they can access, rather than having them navigate through a variety of bureaucratic and often independent "pockets" of activity. Many of the services that we currently provide can be enhanced through the effective use of technology. Many services could probably be centralized, both geographically and within each institution, to provide better access for learners. Shifting to new and different "self-help" models and formats and adopting the concept of "learners helping learners" may be useful and cost-effective ways of providing some services.

We will need to plan support for faculty and service providers in making the transition to the new paradigm. A significant investment in professional development and training will be necessary for people to take the risk of re-thinking and re-designing the things that they already do exceedingly well but which may not support the changing needs of future learners. They will also need the proper equipment and application support to deal effectively with new technologies.

No doubt the array, types and levels of support services for learners will continue to expand as we adopt the new paradigm. One critical factor will be to develop and deliver services that are cost-effective. With existing and future constraints on institutional budgets, this will not be an easy task. As budgets shrink, areas identified for reductions often come from the "service side" of the house. If we are to effectively meet the challenges identified in *CANC*, we will need to make a commitment to cover the costs of providing the services that are expected and anticipated. This first must be examined at the system level; a thorough re-working of the funding mechanism must be implemented. At least in the short-term, additional envelope and special-purpose funds should be provided to assist in the transition, especially in the area of educational technology and support for non-traditional learners. Institutions should be considering ways to reduce costs through developing partnerships, with each other, with private providers and with community agencies. Moving to some "self-help" formats will help defray some costs. And consideration for fees for service in some areas may be appropriate.

Learners in the B.C. college, institute and agency system will increasingly rely on institutions being able to provide them with a range of high quality and flexible support services to learners. This is because the type of learners those institutions are serving is changing and the expectations of most learners are also changing. Therefore, institutions will need to address what services they provide, how they deliver those services, how these services

are evaluated, how the ongoing needs of faculty and the service providers themselves are supported, and how those services are funded and paid for.

So, how well are we really doing? We've *adapted* well to many of the new realities that we face, but we haven't really done an effective job of planning for a new future, one that is not simply an extension of the past. We know what some of the issues are, and we can anticipate some of the future challenges. But until we consciously *adopt* the need for transformation, changes will continue to occur sporadically and incrementally. As we face more competition for learners and more demands for accountability, the success of our institutions will require a more deliberate approach. Those in decision-making positions in the B.C. system need to set a vision for the evolution of the purpose and delivery of educational support services and to plan locally and provincially to implement this vision.

[1] Terry O'Banion. "Creating More Learner Centered Community Colleges." Mission Viejo, CA: League for Innovation in the Community College, 1997.

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*Ted James is Dean of Student Development at Douglas College where he has worked since 1980. He has led a research team to produce a vision paper on the future of educational services in B.C. The vision paper, Learner Support and Success, will be published in the summer of 1999.*


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## Partners

The project is a collaborative effort by the Office of Learning Technologies, the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges.

The site was developed by two BC iibrarians, Ross Tyner (Okanagan University-College) and Annette Lorek (Capilano College). The collection of annotated links has been reviewed and evaluated by four subject experts from across the country. This website is a prototype. Once strategies for validation, breadth and sustainability have been identified the database may be expanded into other discipline-areas.

For more information, contact: Amanda Harby, Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology <harby@ctt.bc.ca>

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# *Charting A New Course* and Educational Technology

*by Jim Bizzocchi and Adrian Kershaw*

*Charting A New Course (CANC)* defines an important role for educational technology. The essence of that role is to be an enabler, not a driver. Technology's job is to help the system realize a range of educational and social goals. The values embedded in *CANC* are profoundly human: learner-centred education, equity, access, respect, innovation and relevance. The authors of the plan understand clearly that technology can be put into the service of these human values.

The key strategies of *CANC* explicitly address how educational technology can provide support for educators and learners. Under the Relevance and Quality strategy section, technology is seen as one of the means by which learners will get the knowledge and skills they need for successful and fulfilling lives. "The classroom will be redefined using computers to augment face-to-face instruction and mixed models of distance learning and classroom-based learning."[1] The Access strategy envisions technology as a tool to improve educational opportunities for an increasing number of British Columbians. "A provincial policy framework for the Learning Highway...will be developed to define responsibilities for distance learning delivery and promote strategies for an effective educational technology program base."[2] In order to make this possible, the Affordability strategy recognizes that resources must be allocated to enable the appropriate use of technology.

It is critical to note that *CANC* always sees this use of technology as something that is embedded within our traditional educational system, not something that will replace it. Technology will be used when it has a positive benefit for learners and educators within that overall context. Within that context, technology will play an important supporting role: "It is clear that technology cannot be adopted in a haphazard way. Its costs and the importance of maintaining quality learning require a measured and well-planned implementation."[3]

*CANC* intends that the implementation will be undertaken by various groups throughout the system. Institutions are expected to incorporate appropriate technology into a range of programming that distributes learning opportunities across campuses, workplaces, and learners' homes. More specific responsibilities are placed on system organizations. The Provincial Learning Network (PLNet) is expected to build the backbone that enables institutions to connect with each other and with learners. The Open Learning Agency (OLA) will maintain its core responsibility to meet the needs of individual distance learners across British Columbia. The Electronic Library Network (ELN) will increase the availability of electronic versions of necessary educational information. The Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology (C2T2) will help institutions ensure a high level of educational quality in their technologically mediated learning activities.

The institutions in our system have responded to the challenge. Technology is being used to support teaching and learning in a number of disciplines utilizing a variety of methods. The most visible growth is in online courses. Those listed in C2T2's Distributed Learning Course Directory have gone from 80 in Fall of 1998 to over 140 in January of 1999. This trend will continue. A number of institutions have major online offerings (between 25 and 80 courses) either currently online or under development. Online courses have been developed across the entire range of system offerings (academic, business, foundations, career, professional and trades programs).

Institutions are using various technologies to deliver and support learning. Some institutions rely on videoconferencing as an efficient way to increase course offerings in smaller centres. One institution has over 30 hours a week on its regular video schedule. Others are working with PLNet to find ways to use the Internet to support videoconferencing and increase cost efficiencies. Broadcast radio, audiographics, internet radio and streaming video are other outreach technologies being used and developed. On-campus teaching and learning is being enriched through the use of intranet, CD-ROM, and classroom presentation technologies.

Institutions are becoming more experienced in the integration of technologically mediated learning. Most institutions have or are developing educational technology plans which help in several ways. They assist in the optimal allocation of scarce institutional resources, and ensure that educational technology implementation is consistent with an institution's educational goals and internal culture and priorities. Within these plans, institutions are beginning to build ongoing educational technology support units. These help ensure that faculty, staff and students get the resources and skills they need to use educational technology effectively. These support units incorporate and develop sound educational practice. Increasingly they are structured as teaching and learning centres that address a broad range of educational development issues including instructional design, learning outcomes and flexible learning assessment.

The Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology works to help the institutions with this work. The Centre supports initiatives in professional development, institutional development, learner support, networking infrastructure, information sharing, and policy development. The Centre develops all these initiatives with the advice and input of system partners, and uses workshops, conferences, institutional visits, audio/video conferences, listserves, and websites to organize and deliver support and services.

These encouraging developments notwithstanding, many challenges face our system if we are to use educational technology in the role envisioned by *CANC*. Ongoing work is needed in funding, professional development, and institutional development. This is a difficult task for a group of relatively small and medium-size institutions with limited internal discretionary resources. Sustainable development will require a system perspective (which is precisely what *Charting A New Course* envisions).

British Columbia has a history of broad planning with respect to educational technology and distributed learning. Many groups and initiatives have addressed the key aspects of system-wide cross-institutional coordination. However, it is necessary to gain formal input (and subsequent buy-in) from system stakeholder constituencies. Real progress will be difficult without this critical component. The Standing Committee on *CANC* has responded to this issue by establishing a broad-based Educational Technology Working Group in the Fall of 1998.

The Educational Technology Working Group includes representation from:

- instructional staff (College and Institute Educators' Association of B.C. and the B.C. Government and Services Employees' Union);
- students (the Canadian Federation of Students);
- support staff (the Canadian Union of Public Employees);
- the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology;
- the Council of Chief Executive Officers;
- the Council of Education Councils; and
- the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology.

The group's mandate is to develop a policy framework on educational technology for the consideration of the Standing Committee. The first task of the Educational Technology Working Group was to develop an environmental scan which examines the role of information technologies and educational technologies from a variety of interrelated perspectives:

- global developments,
- economic transformation,
- competition from other educational providers,
- need for lifelong learning,
- need for increased access to training and education, and
- related provincial and federal initiatives in economic and technological development.

The environmental scan was circulated to stakeholder groups in the college, institute, university-college and agency system early in May of 1999. At the same time, committee members began to turn their attention to the preliminary development of

policy recommendations suggested by the environmental scan.

The recommendations will describe a more systematic and collaborative approach to the development, delivery and support of technologically enhanced courses and programs. They will consider such questions as access, quality, support, infrastructure, and partnerships. These questions flow out of the work of the environmental scan, and at the same time reflect many of the core concerns of *CANC*.

The draft policy framework will be forwarded to the Standing Committee on *CANC* who will circulate the document to the stakeholder groups for review and comment in late summer. The consultation phase should be completed in the earlier part of the Fall. The Standing Committee on *CANC* will then make appropriate adjustments to both the policy recommendations and to the environmental scan. The final version of the multi-year educational technology strategy for the college, institute and agency system should be in place by the end of the year. This latest development will help all of us to achieve the educational and social goals described in *Charting A New Course*.

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[1] *CANC*, p.3.

[2] *CANC*, p.3.

[3] *CANC*, p.21.

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*Adrian Kershaw is Vice-President, Community and Distributed Learning Services at the University College of the Cariboo in Kamloops, BC. In his current role, he has been responsible for the development of UCC's award-0winning interactive television system and for the enhanced use of educational technology in learning and teaching in his institution. He has played a number of roles on provincial committees dealing with distributed learning issues and is currently co-chair of the Education Technology Working Group.*

# Comments from Education Council Chairs

We invited the Education Council Chairs to respond to some questions proposed on the Committee of Education Council Chairs (COEDCO) listserve. While only four individuals responded, and although these are not official positions from any institution nor from COEDCO, the following comments may provide some insight about the impact of *Charting A New Course* from the unique perspective of Education Councils. The respondents were: Rindy Crampton, Chair of College of New Caledonia Education Council; Jill Harrop, Chair of Selkirk College Education Council; Rick Monaghan, Chair of Malaspina University-College Education Council; and Katherine Perrault, Chair of University College of the Fraser Valley Education Council. The responses, in no particular order, were as follows.

*Has Charting A New Course played a significant role in the work of your Education Council?*

- Yes, it has given us direction.
- Yes, Education Council has referred to *Charting A New Course* in its strategic planning.
- *Charting A New Course* (*CANC*) has definitely played a role in our Education Council's work around developing policy. Whenever we have a new policy to develop, or one to revise, we ensure that it reflects the main goals stated in *CANC*. A large part of our Education Council's substantive work has been around policy development and revision, so this is significant.
- The College as a whole has been active in many areas addressed by *Charting A New Course* so the institution as a whole and therefore the Education Council, as part of it, reflects many of the values stated in the document. At our College, senior administration, faculty, Faculty Association and support staff held many of these values before the publication of this document, and so have acted on such issues accordingly for many years.

*Have the strategic directions of Charting A New Course been incorporated in the criteria used for developing and approving programs and/or degrees?*

- Yes, the developers have used the vision and the strategies in developing their proposals. However, many students do not want applied degrees; they want traditional degrees.
- Our institution's goals of Relevance & Quality, Access, Affordability, and Accountability have formed a significant background in our development of Ed Council's criteria for funding of new programs and enhancing existing programs as well as criteria for cutbacks in existing programs.
- Yes, we have been careful to consider the strategic directions of *CANC* in policies around the development and approval of programs. They have provided us with helpful direction. We are in the process of developing our strategic plan, and the *CANC* strategic directions have been incorporated.
- Our Education Council has been active in many areas of accessibility. PLA, Learning Outcomes, Distributed Learning, Career Technical Centre (collaborative with local school district) are all issues brought to Ed Council for response, support and acceptance(where appropriate within our legislated mandate).
- The very important Standing Committees of our Ed Council Programme Committees (22 in all) facilitate a very consultative and collaborative approach to problem-solving and issues. Accountability is another value that is prominent on an institutional level, as demonstrated by the fact that we agreed to be the pilot project for SCOEA's Institutional Evaluation process.
- Our Ed Council took on the task of a self-evaluation this year to dovetail with the Institutional Evaluation. We see these activities as ways of evaluating, validating and proposing change as needed.

*Which parts of Charting A New Course do you find most helpful?*

- The institutional mandate is helpful.
- The ideas in Institutional Strategies for Learner Success are helpful.
- The greatest benefit of *Charting A New Course* to our institution was to provide a comprehensive, unified framework of values upon which to base decisions.
- From the perspective of an Education Council, the goals of relevance and quality and access are most relevant to our work. The implementation chart at the back of *CANC* is helpful.

*Which are most problematic?*

- Access and affordability (to put on enough courses), keeping up with technology, some partnership work, redefined classroom (cost and difficulties in moving the learning process to the learners in small areas), ability to evaluate prior learning and give credit for it when it does not match internal outcomes.
- The applications of such initiatives as PLA, Education Technology, Distance Education when restricted budgets severely limit the development and presentation of these activities. (Although direct budget issues are not a part of our Ed Council mandate and concern, these circumstances must be kept in mind.)
- The concepts themselves might appear to clash when trying to operationalize them (e.g., access and affordability).
- There is a lack of specificity to them which is a problem within the current fiscal reality of limited budgets.
- As a university college our institution has had to implement new degree programs during the last few years and these guiding goals have been helpful in the theoretical sense, but of a more limited value in an implementation sense.

*Do you have any suggestions for improving the implementation of the strategic directions set out in Charting A New Course?*

- Adequate funding is an important issue for continued success.
- We are implementing the directions; sharing of information between institutions (such as that which occurred at the Service-Learning Forum) is the best way I know to help institutions change.
- We have been faced with cutbacks over the last few years. Human resources are taxed in such an environment as they are often engaged in consolidation. There was limited acknowledgment of those resources in *CANC* yet change must occur in the awareness of existing contracts, commitments, etc.
- Our Education Council is looking at the Key Performance Indicators which have been developed provincially and how they are used. There is a general feeling that KPI's should focus more on quality; however, we are just in the beginning stages of examining this issue.
- There is a need for ongoing education for all members of college communities about *Charting A New Course*, its aims and values. Change will occur if the participants have truly "bought into" the need for change.

# The Impact of *Charting A New Course*: Snapshots from the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design

*by Sheila Hall and Peg Campbell*

Established in 1925 as the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts, Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design has evolved into a leading centre of learning that is home to a supportive community of students, practicing artists and designers. We are involved in artistic experimentation in Design, Media and Visual Art. An important aspect of our teaching is the professional and academic formation of our students, who do not just master a body of knowledge but develop intellectual rigor, critical thinking and a range of skills and professional values that prepare them for lifelong learning.[1]

By the year 2000, Emily Carr Institute will have rethought some basic assumptions about learning systems, such as the nature of learning, the specific needs of diverse learners and learning communities, environments for facilitating learning and linkages between learning, change and creativity. We are immersed in an environment of new representations, new forms of cultural expression, new modes of interactive media and new modes of learning.

*Charting A New Course (CANC)* suggests we rethink the project of education in terms of learner-centered strategies, relevancy and quality, accessibility, affordability, accountability, and the driving forces of change. It asks for a re-commitment to work in an atmosphere of creativity and collegiality within our schools and across institutions. Analyzing *CANC*, the authors feel that it reflects a strategic plan written by participants who truly care about the quality of education and equal access to a full range of learning opportunities.

Over the past three years innovative developments directly related to the publication of *CANC* have been initiated at Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design. Some examples:

- the School of Continuing and Networked Education's Transitions Programs was developed to enhance relevance, quality and access to art and design programs responding to diverse learning populations.
- The Centre for Art and Technology has been proposed and will model a new kind of educational orientation. Information, knowledge and skills will be exchanged, developed and practiced by support teams of artists and researchers developing new links to the community.
- First Nations academic studies were initiated, focusing on selected topics in First Nations art from the perspective of First Nations scholarship.
- Learning Outcomes and Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) are being developed and implemented.

In the opinion of the authors, *CANC* has had a significant impact at our institution and has encouraged us to expand our approaches to accessible, flexible and creative programming. This article will focus on the implementation of Learning Outcomes and PLA at the Emily Carr Institute in the past year.

In February of 1998, supported by C2T2 and with skillful guidance from Gillies Malnarich, we actively engaged in defining Learning Outcomes and PLA for the Institute, which comprises five Schools: Foundation and Critical Studies, Visual Arts, Design, Media, and Continuing and Networked Education. Learning Outcomes for departments, programs and individual courses have begun to articulate the knowledge, skills/abilities, values and habits for the applicant and for the graduate.

In March 1998, we made two major procedural decisions. First, we decided that the integration of Learning Outcomes and PLA are essential at the Emily Carr Institute. International research clearly suggested that it is imperative to link the two initiatives, as authentic assessment for PLA cannot be established until outcomes are in place. *CANC* stresses integration, but does not directly link PLA with Learning Outcomes. The authors, coordinators of PLA and Learning Outcomes, realized that we could accomplish more in a collaborative process. Working together we would model our

goal: a rethinking of our teaching and assessment practices across the disciplines and schools.[1]

The second decision responded to a suggestion made in the Executive Summary of *CANC*: "The fundamental values and strengths of the existing college, institute and agency system are central to the strategic plan."[2]

*CANC* was proposing that institutional communities define their values and strengths and integrate these with Learning Outcomes and PLA. At Emily Carr there was active discussion of this suggestion across the institution. *CANC* also suggested system links between institutions. Before we could work with others, we had to address our colleagues at Emily Carr. By debating teaching and learning across the schools, programs and disciplines, we would work to define the problems and gaps within one institution. We thought this model could have application inter-institutionally.

We initiated a pilot project in April 1998, involving two faculty from each school, the five deans, and our registrar. The chair of Education Council and President of our Faculty Association, John Wertschek, was also involved in and supportive of the process. Together we began identifying the qualities of the graduate from and the applicant for our institution. Debates with faculty, staff and administration were intense and heated. Old wounds were opened and schisms between Schools were addressed. Engaging in meaningful conversations, we were discussing the heart of what we do as educators and were learning from each other.

Students gave input in three areas: qualities we should look for in an applicant; knowledge and abilities needed at graduation; and feedback on our critique processes, a major form of our assessments. Including students in the discussions made the process a more dynamic and relevant one. We highly recommend their inclusion in the debate at any institution.

We held an assessment and critique workshop with faculty, sharing strategies we use in our classrooms. The result of this workshop is that cross-school and cross-year critiques including both faculty and students will begin in the fall semester. As the work intensified attendance at workshops increased from sixteen to over two hundred people.

After gathering an immense amount of information, we met with individual schools to define outcomes for specific areas. An interactive Teaching and Learning Website, posting outcomes for discussion with faculty, staff and administration, was created in November, 1998. Articles on Learning Outcomes and PLA, an archive of workshops, URLs to related sites, and listings of general outcomes are available. A linked site for students is under development. In January 1999, our President, Ron Burnett, opened a gallery installation documenting our work over the past year, reaching members of the art, business and education communities, including many of our alumni. The opportunity for everyone to see the work is vital to the initiative. We are also working towards a goal of having alumni contribute through mentorships and in assessing student work.

In February of 1999 we designed another pilot project with the new department, Integrated Media. After Faculty debated and defined the interview questions, first year students observed senior students improvising a "good" and "bad" interview. The purpose was to make transparent that outcomes from Foundation are entrance requirements to second year. These outcomes are the basis for PLA implementation.

Inter-institutional links discussed in *CANC* were addressed this spring with our presentation at the Western Conference of the Coalition for the Advancement of Applied Education (CAAE). Representatives from Alberta College of Art and Design, Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, Northern Institute of Technology, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, B.C. Institute of Technology and Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design debated learning outcomes and PLA initiatives. Subsequently, we made a presentation to faculty at Langara College.

As we reflect on our work to date, several principles stand out clearly:

1. Learning outcomes and PLA are linked and should be integrated. It is impossible to assess prior learning without first putting in place learning outcomes that fit within the whole

institution. It is beneficial for the coordinators of Learning Outcomes and PLA to work as a team.

2. It is essential that educational institutions involved in defining outcomes and PLA have autonomy in their own community. It is important to work with administration and gain their support.
3. It is effective to define outcomes for the whole institution. Schools, programs and individual course outcomes then fit into a coherent system. Defining outcomes should have input from the entire community of faculty, staff, administration and students.
4. Student learning benefits from transparency and clarification of outcomes and assessment within the classroom and across their programs of study.
5. As the student population and contemporary art practice change, outcomes will evolve. Communities need to be prepared to participate in the ongoing work of defining outcomes.

*Charting A New Course* states, "Today's learners need an education and training system which is relevant to current and future job opportunities but which also provides the knowledge and skills necessary to deal successfully with others and to participate fully in the life of the community."[1] If this is to be accomplished, Learning Outcomes and PLA must be embedded and integrated at the institutional level. These initiatives will provide a learner-centered environment and new strategies that recognize learners' needs for flexibility and relevance.

It is critical that these initiatives are given enough time to develop a structural framework and are supported financially by individual administrations and the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology. Thanks to the involvement of our faculty and administration and the support of the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology in the development of our Learning Outcomes and PLA initiatives, the impact of *Charting A New Course* has been substantial.

[1] Some information for this article has been gathered from other ECIAD publications.

[2] *CANC* p.1

[3] *CANC* p.2

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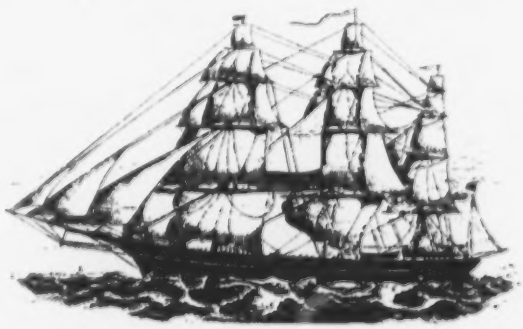
*Peg Campbell is a film-maker who teaches in the School of Media and in the School of Foundations and Critical Studies at Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design. For the past year she has been Learning Outcomes Coordinator at ECIAD.*



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## C2T2 Events & Conferences

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One day workshop using videoconferencing, available on request. Contact: Keith Dunbar at dunbar@ctt.bc.ca www.ctt.bc.ca/events

**Pacific Management Development Institute (PMDI) '99**
June 14-17, 1999 Bowen Island, B.C. Provides an opportunity for professional growth and career development for administrators and managers. Diane Morrison dmorrison@ctt.bc.ca or Cheryle Wilson cwilson@ctt.bc.ca (250) 413-4443

**Kaleidoscope 2000: Innovative Good Practice in Post-Secondary Education**
April 30-May 2, 2000 Vancouver, B.C. A major conference that will provide opportunities to share innovative practices across B.C.'s public post secondary system. Marguerite McCallion (250) 413-4446 mmccallion@ctt.bc.ca

**Connections 2001**
May 5-8, 2001 Whistler, B.C. Amanda Harby harby@ctt.bc.ca (250) 413-4468 or fax (250) 413-4403 www.ctt.bc.ca/edtech/

## Other Events and Conferences

**Advanced Education Council of B.C. (AECBC) Annual General Meeting & Conference**
June 17-19, 1999 New Westminster, B.C. dilli@aecbc.bc.ca. (604) 895-5080 or fax (604) 895-5088. www.aecbc.bc.ca.

**The Forum on Volunteerism, Service and Learning in Higher Education**
June 19-22, 1999 Atlanta, GA. theforum@indiana.edu (812) 855-8550 or fax (812) 855-0162. www.indiana.edu/~acui/the-forum/index.html

**ED-Media 99 World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia & Telecommunications**
June 19-24, 1999 Seattle, WA. (804) 973-3987 or fax (804) 978-7449. aace@virginia.edu

**Innovations 1999**
June 20-23, 1999 Hyatt Regency Hotel, New Orleans, LA. Pam Richards (949) 367-2884 or fax (949)367-2885. www.leaguetlc.org/conference/confinfo/innov99.htm

**ICDE 19th World Conference on Open Learning and Distance Education**
June 20-24, 1999 Vienna, Austria. Tel (+43/1) 588 04-0 or fax (+43/1) 586 91 85 or icde@mondial.at. www.icde.org

**7th International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women**
June 20-26, 1999 Tromso, Norway. womens.worlds.99@skk.uit.no Phone +47 77 64 58 99 or fax +47 77 64 64 20. http://www.skk.uit.no/WW99/ww99.html

**National Conference on Critical Thinking**
June 25-29, 1999 Chicago, IL. ctt@criticalthinking.org (410) 364-5215 or (800) 833-3645. www.criticalthinking.org

**The Centre for Literacy 9th Summer Institute**
June 27-30, 1999 Montreal, QC. literacycntr@dawsoncollege.qc.ca (514) 931-8731 ext. 1415 or fax (514) 931-5181. www.nald.ca/litcent.htm

**24th International Conference Improving University Learning and Teaching**
July 5-8, 1999 Brisbane, QLD Australia. Helen Long, iut99@aol.com

**International Federation of Teachers of English (IFTE)**
July 7-10, 1999 University of Warwick, UK. +44 114 255-5419 or fax +44 114 255-5296. nate.hq@campus.bt.com. http://www.nyu.edu/education/teachlearn/ifte/index.html

**National Academy for Critical Thinking: Training for Trainers**
July 25-29, 1999 San Francisco, CA. cct@criticalthinking.org (410) 364-5082 or (800) 833-3645 or fax (410) 364-5215. www.criticalthinking.org

**The Association 1999 Summer Conference**
July 26-28, 1999 Shilo Inn, Ocean Shore, WA. lhaley@hcc.ctc.edu (206) 870-3759 or fax (206) 870-3787. www.learningconnections.org

**19th International Conference for Critical Thinking**
July 31-August 3, 1999 San Francisco, CA. cct@criticalthinking.org (410) 364-5082 or (800) 833-3645 or fax (410) 364-5215. www.criticalthinking.org

**Using Cases Effectively to Improve Learning and Teaching**
July 31-August 5, 1999 University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. Sponsored by the Pace University Center for Case Studies. www.pace.edu/CTRCaseStudies

**Managing Diversity Summer Institute**
August 3-6, 1999. Cultural Diversity Institute, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB. rfrey@ucalgary.ca (403) 220-4689 or fax (403) 220-2400

**Seminars on Academic Computing (SAC)**
August 6-11, 1999 Snowmass Village, CO. www.educause.edu/sac/sac99/sac99.html

**Innovations in Teaching: Celebrating the Centennial Year at Northern Arizona University**
September 16-18, 1999 Flagstaff, AZ. Dr. Geoffrey Chase geoffrey.chase@nau.edu (520) 523-1580 or fax (520) 523-1581. www.nau.edu

**Problem Based Learning in Small Groups**
October 4-5, 1999 Hamilton, ON. Annette Sciarra sciarra@fhs.McMaster.bc. (905) 525-9140 ext. 22714 or fax (905) 528-6552

**Fourth International Conference on Language and Development**
October 13-15, 1999 Hanoi, Vietnam. clet@ait.ac.th or fax 66 2 524 5872. www.clet.ait.ac.th/hanoi/hanoi1999.htm

**Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network Annual Conference**
October 13-17, 1999 The Resort at Split Rock, Lake Harmony PA. podnet@valdosta.edu. (912) 293-6178 or fax (912) 293-6179

**1999 Conference on Information Technology**
October 20-23, 1999 Chicago Hyatt Regency, Chicago, IL. (949) 367-2884. www.league.org

**National Council for Occupational Education (NCOE)**
October 21-23, 1999 Seattle, WA Cavanaughs on Fifth Avenue Hotel, Rachel Viramontes, rachelv@epcc.edu, El Paso Community College, (915) 831-2613 or fax (915) 831-2598

**CVA Conference: Transition to Work for the New Millenium**
October 21-24, 1999 Swift Current, SK. Focusing on: Direct Transition to Work; Transitions for youth with special/challenging needs; Transition to entrepreneurial/self-employment opportunities; Transition to post-secondary education or training; Youth/Student strand. For information contact Eleanor Corby e.corby@sk.sympatico.ca or fax (306) 773-8011

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**52nd International Conference on Educational Exchange**
November 10-13, 1999 Hotel Inter-Continental, Chicago, IL. Abbe Sloan conference@ciee.org (212) 822-2625 or fax (212) 822-2779. www.ciee.org/conf

**PLAR 99 - Learning has no Boundaries: PLAR as a Tool for Transition**
November 14-17, 1999 Vancouver, B.C. Third National Forum on Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition. www.plar.com/plar99. Forum Secretariat: 1-800-528-8043.

**Visitors' Workshop (An Overview to the PBL Approach at McMaster)**
November 16-19, 1999 Hamilton, ON. Annette Sciarra sciarra@fhs.McMaster.bc. (905) 525-9140 ext. 22714 or fax (905) 528-6552

**Fourth Annual Learning Communities Regional Conference**
November 17-19, 1999 Chicago, IL. Karin Lacour-Rivers klacour@harper.cc.il.us (847) 925-6933. www.harper.cc.il.us/lcc

**1999 Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) Annual Meeting**
November 18-21, 1999 San Antonio, TX. Julia Caplow elpajc@showme.missouri.edu (573) 882-9645 or fax (573) 884-2197. www.coe.missouri.edu/~ashe

**1999 Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) Annual Conference**
November 20-23, 1999 Westin Hotel, Ottawa, ON. Maurice Lelievre mlelievre@cbie.ca (613) 237-4820 ext. 239 or fax (613) 237-1073. www.cbie.ca

**AIEA Annual Conference: Strategic Partnerships in International Education at the New Millenium**
February 24-27, 2000. Savannah Marriott Riverfront, Savannah, GA. Dr. John D. Heyl, (573) 882-6008 or fax (573 882-3223, heylj@missouri.edu

**TESOL 2000 Navigating the New Millennium**
March 14-18, 2000 Vancouver, B.C. (703) 836-0774 or fax (703) 836-7864 tesol@tesol.edu. www.tesol.edu

**Women in Post-Secondary Education Association**
May 26-28, 2000 Best Western Pacific Inn, White Rock, B.C. Annie Holtby holtby@selkirk.bc.ca (250) 472-2704

**AMTEC 2000**
May 27-31, 2000 Vancouver, B.C. Mary Anne Epp maepp@langara.bc.ca (604) 323-5627 or fax (604) 323-5577

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